

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 BELGRADE 1839

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TAGS: PFOR YO US
SUBJ: SILBERMAN ARTICLE

REF: BELGRADE 1670 (NOTAL)

HEREWITH TRANSMITTED IS UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF TEXT
OF ARTICLE BY MIRKO KLARIN IN MAR 27 (PUBLISHED
MAR 25) ISSUE OF NIN ON AMB SILBERMAN'S FOREIGN POLICY
ARTICLE. ARTICLE IS MOST FORTHRIGHT RESPONSE WE HAVE
SEEN TO DATE TO VIEWS ARTICULATED BY AMB SILBERMAN.

THE FIDDLER FROM THE WASHINGTON CELLAR

ONE OF THE MOST PERSISTENT AND LOUDEST "DISSIDENTS"
IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY, FORMER AMBASSADOR LAURENCE
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SILBERMAN, HAS MADE HIMSELF HEARD AGAIN. THIS TIME IT
IS NOT A QUESTION OF PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS, BUT OF A
SOMEWHAT MORE EXTENSIVE AND IN MANY RESPECTS UNIQUE
"ACT" WHICH, IN FACT, REPRESENTS A "THEORETICAL ELABORATION"
OF HIS AMBASSADORIAL PRACTICE, THAT IS, OF THOSE STAND-
POINTS AND MOVES WHICH HE TRIED TO IMPLEMENT DURING
HIS NINETEEN-MONTH TERM OF OFFICE IN BELGRADE.

WHAT IS UNIQUE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED "ACT" WHICH, UNDER A MYSTERIOUS TITLE: "YUGOSLAV OLD COMMUNISM -- A FIDDLER ON THE EUROPEAN ROOF," HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE LATEST ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE "FOREIGN POLICY"?

TO BEGIN WITH, UNIQUE IS THE ALLEGATION OF MR. SILBERMAN THAT YUGOSLAVIA IS A "COUNTRY HOSTILE" TO AMERICA, A COUNTRY WHICH IS AT EVERY STEP TRIPPING AMERICA AND ON CONVENIENT OCCASIONS IS EVEN STABBING IT IN THE BACK. THIS IS, IN FACT, A SPECIFIC SADO-MASOCHISTIC ATTITUDE: YUGOSLAVIA IS ENDEAVORING TO INFLECT "MAXIMUM DAMAGE POSSIBLE" UPON THE USA AND THE LATTER, HOWEVER, IS TOLERATING IT. WHY? MR. SILBERMAN QUOTES SEVERAL REASONS.

THE FIRST REASON IS SO TO SAY OF SENTIMENTAL NATURE: "BECAUSE WE (AMERICANS) ARE ROMANTICALLY DESCRIBING YUGOSLAV 'SOCIALISM' AS COMMUNISM OF A HUMANE FORM." SECOND, BECAUSE THE POLICY OF WASHINGTON TOWARDS YUGOSLAVIA IS BASED ON "ERRONEOUS PREMISE" THE "THE PRESERVATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF YUGOSLAVIA....IS THE ONLY IMPORTANT INTEREST" OF THE US IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. FINALLY, THE US IS NOT ONLY "OVEREXAGGERATING" THE IMPORTANCE OF YUGOSLAV INDEPENDENCE, BUT TO MAKE THINGS WORSE (ACCORDING TO MR. SILBERMAN, OF COURSE) IS EVEN "STIMULATING" IT, BY EXTENDING BILATERAL SUPPORT TO THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT, "WITHOUT THINKING THAT, IN THIS CONNECTION, WE

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SHOULD GET SOMETHING IN RETURN". THE MAIN CULPRIT, OF COURSE, IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT "WHICH CAN EASILY BE FOOLED".

WHO GOVERNS AMERICA?

(HE)...THEN, ALSO OFFERS CERTAIN UNIQUE STANDPOINTS ABOUT NONALIGNMENT, ESPECIALLY ABOUT THE NONALIGNED POSITION OF YUGOSLAVIA.

ALTHOUGH HE PUTS IN THE FOREFRONT THE "SIMILARITY" OF YUGOSLAV AND SOVIET STANDPOINTS "ON EVERY IMPORTANT OCCASION, "MR. SILBERMAN ADMITS THAT "YUGOSLAVS SOMETIMES OPPOSE THE SOVIETS ON PUBLIC PLATFORMS." ALAS, THE FORMER AMBASSADOR ADDS DISAPPOINTEDLY, THEY ARE NOT DOING IT "IN OUR FAVOR - BUT IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE UNITY OF THE NONALIGNED, AND, OF THAT BASIS, ACHIEVE POWER IN THE THIRD WORLD." IT IS NOT QUITE CLEAR AS TO WHETHER MR. SILBERMAN PERHAPS CLASSIFIES

THE US ITSELF AMONG WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS THE "THIRD WORLD," CONSIDERING THAT HE REMARKS THAT THE INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION OF THE YUGOSLAV PRESIDENT "PARTLY ARISES FROM HIS RECOGNIZED SKILL IN MANAGING THE US, BECAUSE HE IS MANAGING US".

BRIEFLY, THE FORMER AMBASSADOR CONCLUDES, WITH THE POLICY OF NONALIGNMENT YUGOSLAVIA IS "WITH IMPUNITY" OPPOSING AMERICAN INTERESTS "THROUGHOUT THE WORLD", ENDEAVOURING TO INFLICT "MAXIMUM DAMAGE POSSIBLE" UPON THE UNITED STATES WHICH IT CONSIDERS TO BE THE "GREATEST OBSTACLE TO CHANGES IN THE WORLD".

MR. SILBERMAN IS CERTAINLY RIGHT -- IN THE MEASURE IN WHICH HE IDENTIFIES HIS CONSERVATIVE VIEWPOINTS AND DUBIOUS INTERESTS WITH THE VIEWPOINTS AND INTERESTS OF THE US. BUT, APPARENTLY, THIS IS PRECISLY HIS WEAK UNCLASSIFIED

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POINT.

HOWEVER, THE TROUBLE LIES IN THE FACT THAT THOSE WHO ARE CALLED UPON TO INTERPRET AMERICAN VIEWPOINTS AND INTERESTS DO NOT THINK IN THE SAME WAY AS THE FORMER AMBASSADOR. DISASSOCIATING ITSELF FROM THE LATEST ATTACK BY MR. SILBERMAN AGAINST THE AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS YUGOSLAVIA, THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS STRESSED THE CONTINUITY OF THIS POLICY "WHICH HAS BEEN PURSUED BY ALL ADMINISTRATIONS, IRRESPECTIVE OF POLITICAL PARTIES CONCERNED, SINCE THE TIMES OF HARRY TRUMAN AND ONWARDS, AND A POLICY WHICH THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE

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TO PURSUE".

THE MINISTRY, OF COURSE, CANNOT POLEMIZE WITH THE PRIVATE STANDPOINTS OF CITIZEN SILBERMAN, BUT IN ITS STATEMENT IT EMPHASIZES PRECISELY THOSE ASPECTS OF YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN RELATIONS WHICH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED CITIZEN IS TRYING TO REFUTE.

FIRSTLY, THE US HAS AN "ESSENTIAL INTEREST" IN SUPPORTING THE INDEPENDENCE, UNIT AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF YUGOSLAVIA. SECONDLY, CONTRARY TO THE FORMER AMBASSADOR, THE STATE DEPARTMENT EVEN FINDS CERTAIN "COMMON INTERESTS" OF THE US AND YUGOSLAVIA, AND FINDS THEM PRECISELY IN THE FIELD OF THE CHANGING OF THE WORLD AND RELATIONS IN IT: IN THE STATEMENT AN EMPHASIS IS PLACED ON A WISH FOR "A MORE INTENSIVE UNCLASSIFIED

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AND MORE CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE GOY ON POINTS SUCH AS THE CSCE, DISARMAMENT, ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH, IN CONNECTION WITH WHICH YUGOSLAVIA IS PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE."

THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS THUS REPUDIATED ITS AT THE PRESENT MOMENT ALREADY FORMER EMPLOYEE ONCE AGAIN. THE FIRST TIME IT WAS FORCED TO DO THAT WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF LAST SUMMER, AFTER A SERIES OF STATEMENTS BY THE THEN AMBASSADOR, IN WHICH HE CLAIMED THAT "MANY ASPECTS OF YUGOSLAV FOREIGN POLICY ARE CLASHING WITH THE INTERESTS AND VALUES OF THE UNITED STATES," AND THAT "THIS IS ALWAYS REFLECTED ON OUR RELATIONS". THE MOTIVE FOR THE AMBASSADOR'S OUTBURST OF ANGER WAS THE CASE OF A CERTAIN AMERICAN CITIZEN, LASZLO TOTH, WHOM THE YUGOSLAV COURT HAD SENTENCED FOR ECONOMIC ESPIONAGE. AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN ASCRIBED HIS RELEASE FROM SERVING HIS TERM OF IMPRISONMENT (BUT NOT

FROM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACT HE HAD COMMITTED) TO HIS OWN PRESSURES, THREATS AND BLACKMAILS, ATTACKING AT THE SAME TIME THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD HIM AND HAD NOT SUPPORTED HIM IN (HIS) POLICY OF PRESSURE AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE STATE DEPARTMENT PUBLISHED A STATEMENT IN WHICH IT "INFORMED" ITS OWN PUBLIC AND THE WORLD AS WELL AS ITS AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE THAT "THE UNITED STATES IS CONTINUING TO HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE GOY" AS WELL AS THAT "IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE US TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE INDEPENDENCE OF YUGOSLAVIA." AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN REMAINED IN BELGRADE UNTIL DECEMBER LAST YEAR WHEN, AFTER THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY VICTORY IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, HE SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION.

EQUAL PARTNERS

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THE CASE OF MR. SILBERMAN HAS SHOWN AGAIN THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE US ARE TOO GOOD AND WELL-DEVELOPED FOR ANY IMMODERATE STATEMENTS, INSINUATIONS AND THREATS ON THE PART OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE ABLE TO ENDANGER THEM. OUR RELATIONS WITH THE US ARE BASED ON "MUTUAL RESPECT, COOPERATION BASED ON EQUALITY AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IF THERE HAVE BEEN CERTAIN ATTEMPTS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ALONG THE LINES OF THESE PRINCIPLES, THEY HAVE USUALLY BEEN COMING ON THE PART OF INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS, BUT NOT ON THE PART OF THE USG".

THESE TITO'S WORDS, UTTERED NEARLY TWO DECADES AGO (AT THE SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE LCY IN APRIL 1958), CAN BE APPLIED TO THE CASE OF MR. SILBERMAN TODAY.

SINCE THE USG RECOGNIZED THE DEMOCRATIC FEDERAL YUGOSLAVIA (ON DEC 22, 1945), AND SENT ITS FIRST POSTWAR AMBASSADOR TO BELGRADE (ON APR 19, 1946), YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN OSCILLATIONS, HAVE ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY BEEN ASCENDING. THAT ASCENT WAS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 50'S WHEN YUGOSLAVIA, AFTER THE COMINFORM RESOLUTION, WAS EXPOSED TO FIERCE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY PRESSURES. THE ASSISTANCE OF AMERICA, AT A TIME WHEN IT WAS THE MOST NECESSARY TO US, ENABLED US IN A LARGE MEASURE TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES WE HAD AT THAT TIME. AT THAT TIME SPECULATIONS AND ACCUSATIONS WERE HEARD, COMING FROM THE EAST, THAT AMERICAN ASSISTANCE WAS MADE CONDITIONAL UPON POLITICAL AND OTHER CONCESSIONS.

WHETHER...?

"FACTS ARE FACTS", TITO SAID IN THAT CONNECTION:
"WE MADE NO CONCESSIONS OF THAT KIND, NEITHER
WERE CONDITIONS OF THAT KIND IMPOSED ON US THEN".

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MR. SILBERMAN, HOWEVER, WOULD NOW LIKE TO SET
CONDITIONS AND DEMAND CONCESSIONS, NOT FOR ASSISTANCE
BUT FOR ECONOMIC AND OTHER COOPERATION BASED ON EQUALITY,
A COOPERATION IN WHICH BOTH PARTNERS FIND DIRECT AND
VERY CONCRETE ECONOMIC INTERESTS* AND
THAT BECAUSE THE TWO COUNTRIES HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS ON
VARIOUS IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS.

THE LOGIC WHICH THIS FORMER AMBASSADOR IS TRYING
TO IMPOSE IS CLEAR AND WELL-KNOWN -- "WHO IS NOT WITH
US IS AGAINST US". IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT THIS LOGIC
PREVENTS ANY COOPERATION BETWEEN STATES WHICH APPROACH
INDIVIDUAL INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS AND MOVES FROM
DIFFERENT POSITIONS, EVEN IN THOSE CASES WHERE THERE
EXIST NO IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL
SYSTEMS, DIFFERENCES SUCH AS THOSE WHICH, FOR EXAMPLE,
EXIST BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE US.

SPECULATIONS ABOUT "RETURN"

YUGOSLAVIA HAS NEVER EVEN TRIED TO HUSH UP PERIODIC
DIFFERENCES IN VIEWS ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHICH MR. SILBERMAN

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IS CLASSIFYING AMONG THE "SINS OF ANTI-AMERICANISM."
ON THE CONTRARY, AS A PROMINENT YUGOSLAV DIPLOMAT
WROTE IN THE PAST, THERE EXISTED A "STABLE NEGATIVE
ASSESSMENT OF CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF
THE US WHICH WAS "TRANSLATED INTO ACTIVE EFFORTS OF
YUGOSLAVIA WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF NONALIGNED COUNTRIES,
THE UN, AND IN A WIDER AREA".

FROM A SOMEWHAT LENGTHY LIST OF INTERNATIONAL CRISES
AND PROBLEMS ABOUT WHICH YUGOSLAVIA AND THE US HAD OR
STILL HAVE DIFFERENT STANDPOINTS, LET US SINGLE OUT
ONLY A FEW OF THEM: POLITICAL AND MATERIAL (FINANCIAL)
ASSISTANCE OF YUGOSLAVIA TO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA;
SUPPORT TO ARAB COUNTRIES AND TO THE PALESTINE MOVEMENT;
SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF ANGOLA AND OTHER LIBERATION
MOVEMENTS; A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM AND OTHER
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INITIATIVES IN THE UN WHICH ARE NOT TO THE LIKING OF
WASHINGTON.

INSTEAD OF MAKING ANY FURTHER
ENUMERATIONS, IT WILL BE ENOUGH TO SAY THAT SOCIALIST
YUGOSLAVIA--WHENEVER AND WHEREVER IT HAS FOUND REASON
TO DO SO--HAS OPENLY OPPOSED ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF
IMPERIALISM AND HEGEMONISM, AND THAT, ALTHOUGH DOING
THAT, IT HAS NOT BECOME EITHER ANTI-AMERICAN OR ANTI-
SOVIET, AND HAS NOT BECOME EITHER PRO-AMERICAN OR PRO-
SOVIET.

THEREFORE THE INSINUATIONS MADE BY MR. SILBERMAN
ABOUT THE "SIMILARITY" OF YUGOSLAV AND SOVIET STAND-
POINTS, WHICH SHOULD BRING INTO QUESTION THE NONALIGNED
POSITION OF OUR COUNTRY, CAN SATISFY OR "AROUSE
THE CONCERN" ONLY OF THOSE WHO ARE UNINFORMED AND FOR-
GETFUL. THOSE WHO HAVE A SLIGHTLY BETTER MEMORY
CERTAINLY REMEMBER THAT SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE "RETURN"

OR "DRAWING NEAR" OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE (SOCIALIST) CAMP HAVE BEEN APPEARING WITHIN CERTAIN INTERVALS OF TIME FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES. TO PUT IT MORE PRECISELY, SINCE SEPTEMBER 1956 WHEN, IN A LETTER TO THE THEN AMERICAN PRESIDENT EISENHOWER, FURTHER DELIVERIES OF PLANNED MILITARY ASSISTANCE WERE CANCELLED, CONSIDERING THAT--ACCORDING TO YUGOSLAV ASSESSMENTS--THERE NO LONGER EXISTED NEED FOR THEM.

THERE IS AN INTERESTING COINCIDENCE AS REGARDS THE TIMING OF MR. SILBERMAN'S PRIVATE SETTLEMENTS OF ACCOUNTS WITH THE FOREIGN POLICY OF YUGOSLAVIA.

HIS FIRST ATTACK (THE TOTH CASE) TOOK PLACE ON THE EVE OF THE BEGINNING OF THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF THE NONALIGNED IN COLOMBO.

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NOW, AT THE TIME OF THE APPEARANCE OF HIS ARTICLE ABOUT "THE FIDDLER ON THE EUROPEAN ROOF," THE NONALIGNED ARE MAKING PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF THE COORDINATING BUREAU, TO BE HELD AT THE BEGINNING OF APRIL IN NEW DELHI.

COINCIDENCE

PERHAPS THIS IS REALLY ONLY "MERE COINCIDENCE," ALTHOUGH PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES--THOSE AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE NONALIGNED (SEPT 1961 IN BELGRADE), ON THE EVE OF WHICH THE THEN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO YUGOSLAVIA ALSO MADE HIMSELF HEARD--LEAD TO A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, WHILE ONLY GUESSES CAN BE MADE ABOUT THAT (QUESTION), THERE ARE NO DOUBTS OR DILEMMAS AS REGARDS SILBERMAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS NONALIGNMENT.

NONALIGNMENT IS, IN FACT, WHAT IRRITATES HIM MOST OF ALL IN THIS WHOLE AFFAIR: ACCORDING TO HIM, NON-ALIGNMENT IS EVERYWHERE AND ALWAYS "ANTI-AMERICAN". IN ADDITION, THE FORMER AMBASSADOR HAS NOT MISSED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS A STRONG REPROACH TO AMERICAN PRESIDENTS, STATE SECRETARIES AND OTHER FUNCTIONARIES OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, ON THE GROUNDS THAT "SEVERAL TIMES THEY STUPIDLY EXPRESSED APPROVAL OF THE YUGOSLAV NONALIGNMENT."

PROBABLY IN ORDER NOT TO APPEAR TO BE "STUPID" AGAIN, ACCORDING TO THE CRITERIA OF THE FORMER AMBASSADOR, THOSE CONCERNED IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT, IN (THEIR)

STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH SILBERMAN'S LATEST PRO-
VOCATION, HAVE DROPPED OUT THE PREVIOUS FREQUENTLY USED
FORMULATION ABOUT SUPPORT TO THE "NONALIGNED POSITION"
OF YUGOSLAVIA. DOES IT MEAN THAT THE ATTITUDE IS
CHANGING? WHAT, IN THAT CASE, SHOULD BE SAID ABOUT
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OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN DOCUMENTS (THE MOST IMPORTANT
OF WHICH CERTAINLY AS THE WASHINGTON DECLARATION
OF 1971), AS WELL AS ABOUT THE STATEMENTS BY THE THREE
LATEST AMERICAN PRESIDENTS -- NIXON, FORD AND CARTER--IN
WHICH IT IS STRESSED, IN VARIOUS WAYS, THAT THE UNITED
STATES IS SUPPORTING THE NONALIGNED ORIENTATION OF THE
YUGOSLAV FOREIGN POLICY?

NONALIGNMENT, QUITE CERTAINLY, IS NOT TO THE LIKING
OF MANY PEOPLE AND IS GIVING RISE TO PERIODIC NERVOUSNESSES
IN MANY QUARTERS, INCLUDING OF COURSE THE AMERICAN ONE
AS WELL. THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLE: DEEP-ROOTED RELATIONS
ARE DIFFICULT TO CHANGE, ACQUIRED PRIVILEGES ARE
RELUCTANTLY ABANDONED, AND USURPED RIGHTS ARE STUBBORNLY
PRESERVED.

NEVERTHELESS, IF TODAY BOTH YUGOSLAVIA AND THE US
CAN BE SATISFIED WITH THE ATTAINED LEVEL OF RELATIONS
AND THEIR INCREASINGLY INTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT, THEN THIS
IS, TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, A RESULT OF THE NONALIGNED
POLICY WE ARE PURSUING. ANY DEVIATION FROM THESE
POSITIONS, WITHER TOWARDS ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER ONE,
WOULD BRING YUGOSLAVIA INTO A POSITION IN WHICH MR.
SILBERMAN WOULD OBVIOUSLY WISH TO SEE IT: IN A POSITION
OF DEPENDENCE IN RELATION TO ONE BLOC AND A POSITION OF
ANTAGONISM IN RELATION TO THE OTHER ONE. FOR SILBERMAN
AND PEOPLE SIMILAR TO HIM, ANY ONE OF THESE POSITIONS
WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE BETTER THAN THE PRESENT, NONALIGNED
ONE. YORK

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